



# PPCC KIDMIN



## Welcome to the Pikes Peak Christian Church Kidmin Volunteer Handbook!

We are grateful that you have chosen to serve with the children's ministry and make a difference in the lives of young people. Here are a few things you should know before we start:

1. You are awesome and so appreciated! We love our volunteers.
2. As a staff, we would love to know how we can serve you better. If you ever need prayer, please let us know! Along with this, the expectation is that every volunteer attend a worship service each week. If serving in Kidmin makes this difficult or impossible, the staff would be happy to help find a solution.
3. If you ever have a question about this handbook or anything we do in Kidmin, please ask us. We typically have reasons behind everything we do, and would be happy to share with you.
4. We don't ever want you to be in a position where you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. As a staff, we would much rather deal with a frustrated parent or an upset child than put volunteers in that position. If you are ever in a situation like that, feel free to come get a staff member.
5. This handbook contains the official policies of the children's ministry at PPCC. It is to these standards that volunteers will be held. Please let a Kidmin staff member know if you have any questions about them. The first section contains policies that are common to both Early Childhood and Elementary, followed by policies specific to each age group. You will notice that after each section there is a brief summary of the information. That is to highlight the basic elements of the policy and serve as a quick reference.

## Basic NextGen Philosophy

The purpose of the PPCC NextGen Team (which operates within the Family Discipleship Team) is to lead every child into a lifelong relationship with Jesus that grows through college and beyond. This process has a different emphasis in each life phase:

Early Childhood: "I am safe and loved."

Elementary: "I am learning who God is."

Student Ministry: "I am learning who God is to me."

Early Childhood (Birth-5 yrs) and Elementary (Kindergarten-4<sup>th</sup> Grade) fall under the title of Children's Ministry, or "Kidmin." Even though the emphasis varies with each phase, our method as leaders remains much the same. The five parts of our strategy are:

1. **BE PRESENT:** Be physically, emotionally, and mentally ready.
2. **CREATE A SAFE PLACE:** Make it safe to share, and make what's being shared safe.
3. **PARTNER WITH FAMILIES:** Look for opportunities to impact family life.
4. **MAKE IT PERSONAL:** Use what God is doing in your life to make an impact.
5. **MOVE THEM OUT:** Prepare them for the next season.

We recognize that we are not the ones who bring children to Christ, but that the Holy Spirit brings them to Himself. Therefore, this entire process must be wrapped in prayer and humility. We invite you to join in as we come alongside the Holy Spirit to make a difference in the lives of young people. Welcome!

# General Policies

## CCB and Scheduling

Each month, the coordinator of the department in which you serve will email you a request through CCB (Church Community Builder) to RSVP for the Sundays in that month. We ask that all volunteers respond to this request with either “yes” or “no” by the Wednesday of each week at the latest. That allows the staff time to find a substitute if necessary. If possible, please respond through CCB, as it automatically updates our volunteer roster for the week. In general, we expect volunteers to serve every week, but we understand that vacations, illnesses, and life sometimes make it necessary for a volunteer to miss a week. This is not a problem; we simply request that you inform a Kidmin staff member as early as possible.

***Please RSVP through CCB by the Wednesday of each week.***

## Nametag Procedures

When a family arrives at church on Sunday morning, they will sign their children into our computerized system. The system will print them three tags: two will have the child’s name and a four-digit number on it, and the third will only have the corresponding four-digit number. Whoever drops the child off at the classroom should keep the nameless tag with them. One of the nametags goes on the child’s shirt. When the child arrives at his or her classroom, the other nametag goes in the class roster book. The leader must have this roster book with them at all times (in the classroom, at the playground, during an emergency evacuation, etc.).

When the adult arrives to pick up the child after programming, they **MUST** have the corresponding number tag. We have to send the child back with the adult that brought them. This is the only way we can verify that the child does not leave with a dangerous adult (a stranger, parent who has lost custody, threatening family member, etc.) If they do not have the correct tag, they must return to the manned check-in station to be printed a new one. They will be required to show identification to a staff member for verification, and then a new number tag will be printed. There is no shame in sending a parent back to the check-in station. If they argue or are difficult, you can explain the reasoning behind the policy and direct them to a staff member. In general, parents will be grateful that we take this policy seriously. Do not allow a child to leave with an adult who is unable to present the correct tag.

Upon presentation of the correct number tag, remove the tag from the child’s shirt. Tear it in half, put one of the halves on top of the corresponding nametag in the roster book, and throw the other half away. This allows us to see who has been picked up from the classroom and who is remaining. Removing the tag provides another security measure, as the child’s name is not on a visible tag when they leave the church building.

***An adult MUST present a tag with the same number as the child they are attempting to pick up. When a child gets picked up, take the tag off their shirt, tear it, and put it on top of their tag in the roster book.***

## Emergency Procedures

In case of an emergency, the first thing to remember is to remain calm. Children will respond based on how they see the adults responding. *In any situation where the classroom is evacuated, the class roster book must be taken.* This is the only way we can account for children.

### Fire

In case of a fire, classes will be notified by the sirens and strobe lights in each room (if you are prone to seizures, please inform a Kidmin staff member so that we can be aware). Classes should quickly and calmly line up. Exit out the east doors near the playground and make your way to the rock retaining wall. Line up according to age of the children: middle schoolers should go as far west as possible (to the light post with a sign that says EP) and everyone else should line up in descending order heading east. Infants should be the easternmost group, as close to the sheds and dumpsters as possible. Using the roster book, leaders should make sure all of their children are accounted for. Wait for further instruction from the Guardians or a pastor.

### Lockdown

In case of a building lockdown, classes will be notified by an announcement over the building-wide PA system. Immediately close the door and make sure the security bar is latched. If applicable, close the blinds on all windows, especially the door window. Turn out the lights. Children should be hidden and covered as well as possible. Use tables,

chairs, or other materials to hide the children. As calmly as possible, ensure that the children remain silent. Wait for further instruction from the Guardians or a pastor.

### Tornado

In case of a tornado, classes will be notified by an announcement over the building-wide PA system. Classes should quickly and calmly line up. Make your way to the NextGen Worship Center. Upon arrival, have children get in the “tornado position” along the walls. Have them sit in a cross-legged position with hands covering the back of the neck and head. Do not have children sit in front of or on the stage. Using the roster book, leaders should make sure all of their children are accounted for. Wait for further instructions from the Guardians or a pastor.

***Remain calm in the case of an emergency. Remember to take the roster book whenever you leave the classroom. Listen to the instructions of the Guardians or a pastor.***

## Sick Child

If a child becomes ill while at Kidmin programming, we will work hard to avoid the spread of illness to other children. If a child vomits or has a fever, separate them from the other children. Parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately. If a child shows other symptoms or illnesses (unexplained rash, pink eye, sore throat, persistent or “whooping” cough, etc.), inform a Kidmin staff member. Further investigation and action will be taken.

***If a child vomits or has a fever, isolate them and inform a Kidmin staff member. If they display other symptoms, ask a Kidmin staff member to investigate further.***

## Noticing and Reporting Potential Abuse

It is an unfortunate reality that those who serve with kids might encounter abusive situations. Each year, child protection agencies investigate the situations of 6.6 million children who are thought to be abused. One report is made to these agencies every ten seconds. While it might seem unlikely that these children would show up at our church, there is no indication whatsoever that socioeconomic status, education level, or religion has any impact on these numbers. This means that a child from a Christian home is just as likely to suffer abuse as any other child.

Especially when serving with older children, there is a chance they will tell you about an abusive situation. For this reason, it is best to never guarantee to keep a child’s secret. If they wish to tell you a secret and that you not tell anyone else, you could say something like, “I’m sorry, but I can’t promise to keep your secret. I love you and want to protect you, and that might mean I have to tell someone else. I would still like to hear what you have to say.” Avoid making the child feel guilty and assure them that they will not get in trouble. If a child discloses something to you that you think indicates abuse, notify a Kidmin staff member *immediately*. Avoid prying into the child’s life, especially in front of others.

In many instances, children will be unable or will choose not to tell about abusive situations. In these cases, it is helpful to know what to look for. Just because a child displays one or more of these traits does not mean they are being abused. However, these are some guidelines that could indicate abusive situations:

- Unexplainable lacerations, bruises, welts, or other injuries
- Extreme discomfort or fear of physical contact
- Extreme discomfort or fear of a specific gender
- Extreme fear of a specific person
- Behavioral extremes such as appearing overly compliant and passive or overly aggressive and demanding
- Frequent physical complaints such as headaches or stomachaches
- Knowledge of or interest in sexual behaviors that are not age appropriate
- Strong feelings of guilt or shame
- Extreme secretiveness

If you notice any of these, tell a Kidmin staff member immediately. Do not share this information with anyone other than a church staff member. It is nobody else’s business, and the staff member will take appropriate action.

***If you encounter a situation that you believe might be abusive, inform a Kidmin staff member immediately. Do not share this information with ANYONE else.***

## Running or Missing Child

If a child attempts to escape or you realize that you are missing a child, initiate “runner” protocol. Remain calm. If there are two adults in the classroom, one should remain with the children. If you are the only adult in your classroom, immediately go to a nearby room and ask the adults in that room to monitor yours. As soon as possible, notify a Guardian that a child has run or is missing so that they can begin their own protocol. Calmly scan the building and inform a Kidmin staff member who will help determine if further action is necessary. When the child is located, inform a Guardian.

***If a child attempts to run away or goes missing, calmly inform a Guardian and scan the building for the child after making sure your class is monitored by another adult.***

# Early Childhood

## Adult to Child Ratios

In order to maintain a safe and orderly environment we have elected to limit classrooms to the ratios listed in the following table. These ratios are based on the state regulations for licensed childcare facilities.

Age of Children	Maximum Children per Adult
Infants (6wks-12 mos)	3
Walkers (12-23 mos)	5
2 yrs	6
3 yrs	8
4 / 5 yrs	10

Our computer system will not let a parent sign a child into a room that has a ratio hold. If a parent tries to get around this by asking you to make an exception for their child, please explain that the ratio holds are in place for the safety of their children. Additionally, do not accept a child into a class that is not designed for their age. The curriculum and activities are designed for the specific age group, so a child who is out of place will not benefit from them. There are also further safety issues if a child is in a classroom that is not his or her actual age. If the parent argues or has further questions or concerns, please direct them to a staff member. Obviously, we never want to turn a child away due to a ratio hold. If we must do so, we will offer the parents a voucher for a free coffee at The Peak and coloring sheets and crayons for the child.

***We have ratios in our EC classes for safety reasons. Don't let a parent put a child in your class who is not the correct age, or who has not checked in.***

## Snacks

The Children's Ministry will provide a snack for all children attending our Sunday morning programming. The snack will include a gluten and dairy free option. Snacks will only be provided during the designated snack time. No personal snacks will be served in the nursery or in early childhood rooms. This is to reduce the chance of another child having an allergic reaction, and to alleviate the "But I want what he's having" conflicts. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis for children with unique allergies or dietary needs as well as for children under the age of 18 months who are still on formula/breast milk. These exceptions will be determined by a Kidmin staff member. No food is allowed in the walkers side of the nursery. For snack time, these children should be taken out to the tables between the walkers and infants room. Water is provided with snacks. Parents of children in the nursery or two-year-old room should bring a sippy cup or water bottle for their child. Children in the three-year-old or 4s & 5s classes should use the provided water cups. All bottles and sippy cups need to be labeled with the child's name prior to use and stay labeled for the duration the child is in care.

***All EC classes will serve snacks and water during programming, but only during the designated snack time, and only the designated classroom snack. There should be no snacks served in the walkers side of the nursery.***

## Bathroom Operations and Diaper Changing/Checking

If the child is not yet potty trained, please ensure the parent provides diapers and wipes for them in a clearly marked bag (masking tape is available in all rooms to mark bags during drop-off). The church does stock a few diapers in varying sizes for emergencies, but parents are expected to bring their own. Diaper changes will be conducted as needed and checked at a minimum of once every hour. At drop-off, the child needs to be checked to verify that the child is arriving clean and dry. If that is not the case, promptly change the child's diaper. Proper diapering procedure is listed next to each changing table. Diaper checks and changes will be recorded on the check-in sheet. Only wet diapers are allowed to be changed in rooms without an established changing station. If a child in a room without a changing station has a dirty

diaper, the parent needs to be called and the child will be changed in the hallway bathroom. Volunteers who are changing diapers must do so in view of another worker. This is for the safety of the child AND the volunteer and will be strictly enforced/followed. Whenever possible, the child will be changed by a worker of the same gender.

When/If a child needs assistance in the bathroom, the volunteer is never allowed to enter the bathroom. The volunteer can assist the child (i.e. wiping, pants buttoning, etc.) from the doorway in view of another worker. Privacy of the child still needs to be considered while assisting them from the bathroom doorway.

***Diapers should be checked once an hour and changed as needed in view of another volunteer. If the classroom does not have a changing station, only wet diapers will be changed. A volunteer should never be in the bathroom with a child for any reason.***

## Spare Clothing

The church has a limited supply of clothes in the nursery for children up to size 2T. However, if no change of clothing is available, the parent will be called to return to the nursery to determine a course of action.

## Discipline

Children sometimes engage in unsafe behaviors. If a child is doing something that is endangering themselves, another child, or a volunteer, the volunteer will attempt to redirect the child's attention. If the child continues to engage in unsafe behaviors and redirection is not sufficient, volunteers will ask a Kidmin staff member to contact the parent and ask that the parent take the action they feel is appropriate to correct the behavior. If a parent has to be contacted more than once per class, they will be asked to remove the child from the environment. They may come back the following Sunday. Because the goal in EC is for the child to feel safe and loved, children will not be disciplined for not focusing, participating in activities, or being disruptive.

***If a child is doing something dangerous, attempt to redirect his or her attention. If the child continues the behavior, parents will be contacted.***

## Parent Policy

Parents are not allowed in the classrooms. For the safety of the children attending our programming, all adults age 18 years and older in our classrooms are required to be background checked. This means that parents may not enter our classrooms. Parents are welcome to watch the class through a window or door and may pick up their child at any time. All exceptions must be cleared by the Kidmin staff.

***Don't let parents come into the classroom.***

## Clean-Up Policy

Each room will have a dirty toy bin. Any toys that have been in a child's mouth or look dirty during or after programming needs to be placed in the dirty toy bin to be cleaned. If you serve at the 11:00 service, please tie up trash bags and place them in the hallway to be picked up by custodial staff.

# Elementary

## Bathroom Policy

When a child goes to the bathroom it is one of the times he or she is most vulnerable to abuse, bullying, and abduction. The purpose of this policy is twofold: to protect the child from danger and to protect our volunteers from accusations. However, policy and protocol can get very complicated in these situations. The general rule of thumb is that no adult (stranger OR volunteer) should ever be in the bathroom alone with a child. Essentially, that is the theory behind this entire policy.

### Taking a Single Child

1. If a child approaches you and asks to use the restroom, walk with them all the way to the bathroom. Whenever possible, the child should be accompanied by an adult of the same gender.
2. When you reach the bathroom, ask the child to wait outside while you check if anyone is currently in the room. If you are the same gender, walk into the bathroom to check. If not, knock on the door, open it a crack, and ask if anyone is there. If the bathroom is occupied, wait outside with the child.
3. When the bathroom is clear, send in the child and wait outside. If another adult attempts to go into the bathroom, kindly tell them you have a child in there and ask them to either wait until the child is done, or use another bathroom.
4. When the child exits, walk them back to the classroom.

### Taking Multiple Children

1. If you decide to take a class-wide bathroom break, walk the group to the bathroom.
2. Prop the door open and send the group in while you wait outside.
3. Walk the children back to the classroom.

Children should not be sent to the bathroom unaccompanied.

If you must go into the bathroom with a child (i.e. to help with a bloody nose), ask another adult to go with you AND prop the door open.

***Children should never be in the bathroom alone with any adult. They should not be sent to the bathroom unaccompanied.***

## Physical Touch

In order to protect both our children and volunteers, we have strict requirements about how to touch children. In general, use the “bathing suit rule.” If the area would be covered by a one-piece swimsuit, avoid touching a child there.

- Avoid “front hugging” a child. If you wish, use a “side hug” by putting an arm around a child’s shoulders and pulling them toward you. High fives, fist bumps, and handshakes are great ways to show affection.
- No child should ever sit on a volunteer’s lap. Ask the child to sit on the ground next to you instead. This will be strictly enforced.
- Except for extreme situations (a child is in danger or is endangering someone else and needs to be removed quickly), avoid picking children up. Do not try to pull a child along if he or she is unwilling. If a child is obstinately refusing to move, get a Kidmin staff member and rejoin your class.

***Be careful how you touch children. Avoid the “bathing suit area” and using physical force to direct a child.***

## Discipline

We have awesome children at PPCC. However, there are times that action is necessary to correct a behavior. In these cases, we will use a three-step process: remind, move, remove.

1. REMIND the child of expectations and how they are supposed to be acting. This is a form of positive reinforcement. Instead of saying “stop doing that,” say “right now we’re paying attention to the front.”
2. If this does not solve the issue, MOVE the child away from the temptation. If there is a specific person they are bothering or some item they are distracted by, reposition them in the room.

3. If the problem persists or gets worse, it may be necessary to REMOVE the child from the area. This should be seen as a last resort, as we would prefer that all of our children remain in learning environments. If you reach this step with a child, inform a Kidmin staff member. It is possible that a conversation will need to occur with a parent.

In extreme cases, it might be necessary to skip to removing the child (i.e. they are in a physical fight, they have lost control, other children are in danger, etc.). In these cases, get a Kidmin staff member to help determine what action needs taken.

***When a child needs his or her attention redirected, use the three-step process of REMIND, MOVE, REMOVE.***